

SOME NOTABLE PICTURES.

THE FINE COLLECTION OF A SOUTH AMERICAN DIPLOMAT.

Examples of the Old Masters in Senhor Mendonça's Gallery—Remarkable History of a Titan—Something About the Experiences of an Art Enthusiast.

Señor de Mendonça, special Brazilian envoy to this country, is an enthusiast on art. He has only been a resident of Washington for a few months, but already his beautiful home on New Hampshire avenue is celebrated for its free and hearty hospitality, and it contains one of the most notable collections of pictures in the city. Mr. de Mendonça is a very approachable and agreeable gentleman. His enthusiasm for and appreciation of art became quickly apparent. He is of medium height and a fastidious dresser. His complexion is a clear olive and his hair coal black and straight. He is of the Brazilian type and of Portuguese descent, like most of his countrymen.

His picture gallery begins at the spacious entrance hall. It covers the library walls, it overflows into the drawing and dining-rooms, and lines the staircase, while some of the smaller gems are in the private apartments of the lady of the house. There are nearly two hundred pictures in the collection. "When I first began," Mr. de Mendonça said, "I was full of youthful enthusiasm for art and made numerous expensive mistakes in collecting and buying, as nearly all beginners do. I wasted money, and I learned that even reputable dealers were not to be trusted implicitly. Beside my experience and study developed my judgment and taught me by and by to tell the false from the true for myself. I kept weeding out my purchases, being more and more cautious, until now I do not consider that I have a really poor picture in my collection. For the past ten years I have felt that I was able to rely upon my own judgment. I have an art library containing biographies, catalogues, etc., of all the distinguished collections in the world, and treating on art generally. There are over two thousand volumes in it, with engravings and etchings of all the celebrated works known."

To begin with the old masters, Mr. de Mendonça's principal canvases can only be briefly described. Titian's "Susannah Surprised by the Elders at the Bath" is probably the finest picture he has in the collection. This picture came into his possession several years ago. He was struck at once by its peculiar merits, although he found it in the hands of a dealer, but on investigation he was able to trace its history to a well-known British collector, and found it enumerated in the National catalogue as belonging to that collection. It was painted originally for Spain.

"The dealer said he obtained it through a fast scion of the house, who stole it from the ancestral halls and put it in pawn to pay his debts, where the dealer picked it up for a mere song and disposed of it to me. After I had examined the catalogue I sent a commissioner to examine the collection of which it was said to have formed part, but he did not find it there. But it was included in the catalogue of the collection. In an authentic written description of the picture it is stated that Titian's name and the date of painting are inscribed on the dark side of the cornice, on which one of the Elders rests his hand. On examining the picture in a strong light I was able to read the name of Titian and date, making his age at that time eighty-two years. He died at eighty-four years of age. Thus its genuineness was attested to my satisfaction as well as by the flesh-tints and the lifelike expression of the countenance of the surprised and indignant Susannah, mingled with consternation and fear, and the menacing and crafty attitudes of the Elders."

This picture is in the library. On the wall of the staircase just as you ascend is a Leonardo da Vinci, "Roman Ruins." Mr. de Mendonça said he had in New York a Paolo Veronese, "Festive Assembly," from the Blenheim collection of the Duke of Marlborough, which is too large and imposing a canvas for the walls of a private residence. He hopes to make arrangements to put this rare picture on exhibition at the Art Gallery very soon. In the library we find "St. Catharine," by Perugino. It bears the artist's signature and date, "1448." A nimbus surrounds the delicate head, and the uplifted eyes are very beautiful, but sad in expression.

On an easel in the drawing-room is a Murillo, "The Holy Family." This is one of the two smallest Murillos in existence, and has been transferred from the canvas to wood. This picture represents the Holy Mother, dressed as a peasant woman, holding the divine child, in a tunic of white, as she sits under the wayside tree. St. Ann is behind her and St. Joseph in the foreground. The tone of this picture is very rich, soft, and smooth. There is another Murillo—a lovely woman's face—a "Maddalene," from the celebrated Bernini and Perelli collection. Between the windows in the bay of the library hangs "Ecce Homo," by Mateo Cerezo, from the Aguado collection. It is an ideal head of Christ, crowned with thorns, the face full of a divine compassion, as if he were uttering, "Not my will but Thine be done." Franz Hals' portrait of a "Professor of Leyden" is that of a rugged-faced old Dutch scholar, evidently in the midst of a demonstration to his class. It is very realistic, and its fit companion across the way is "The Beggar," by Van Dyck, very dark and strong in tone. The old, pinched face, with straggling beard, is full of pathos as he asks alms. It is from the De Zoete collection. By David Teniers, the younger, is "Tender's Castle." By Albert Cuyp, "The Halt," representing a landscape and castle. In the drawing-room is one of the most interesting pictures of all; it is in a real antique gilt frame—"The Oaks," by G. de Hondecoeter, who was the father of the Dutch, English, and French landscape painters. There are only five of this artist's pictures known to exist, and its genuineness is attested by the fact that it was purchased by Señor de Mendonça at the time of the Aspinwall collection sale in New York a few years ago. These gnarled old oaks have a very natural look about them, and the perspective under and through the foliage is far-reaching and illusive of description. Jacobus Ruysdael's "Entrance to the Ruins of the Castle Broderode," from the John Newenbury collection, is a charming study in sky and water at the foot of the castle wall, where its hoary image is reflected, as in a mirror, in the depths below, and the sand dune between it and the sea, the gray, scudding clouds above, are all suggestive of that coolness and stillness of nature preceding a storm. There is a Van Ostade on the stairway, "Two Boors" in a kitchen smoking and playing cards, which is a very fine specimen of real life. Going down a little way there is a "Portrait of an Old Man," by Ferdinand Bol, that might be mistaken for a Rembrandt. Now comes Rubens' and Sutherland's "Rape of Proserpine," the first study of this great painting in the Blenheim collection. "The Chariot is represented as rising out of the sea. The three horses are in Rubens' own hand, spirited, fiery creatures, each one pulling and straining every muscle to leap on shore, which is exhilarating to even look at. There is in the library a Watteau copy of the "Venus and Mars of Rubens" and a study of still life by Chardin. E. L. S.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

"Literature and Poetry," by Rev. Philip Schaff, D. D., the noted theologian and professor of church history in the Union Theological Seminary, is a handsome volume of over four hundred pages, issued from the press of Charles Scribner's Sons. Its contents consist of ten scholarly essays, written in a clear and dignified style, on "The English Language," "The Poetry of the Bible," "The Dies Irae," "The University: Past, Present, and Future," and Dante and his great work, the "Divina Commedia." The essay on the English language is especially noteworthy and valuable. It considers briefly the sources from which our vocabulary has been drawn; shows that the strong, characteristic words of the language are Anglo-Saxon; gives instructive data concerning the proportion of words of Anglo-Saxon and other origins used by the great writers of the English tongue, and indicates succinctly the author's view of the future of English. "All these peculiarities of the English," he says, "point out its cosmopolitan destination. We use this word, of course, only in a relative sense. The English can never absorb the thousand tongues now spoken on earth. Our many-sided humanity will never be contented with one speech. The difference of language and dialects will last as long as the difference of races and nations. The German, the French, the Spanish, the Russian will expand with the races that use them. But the progress of humanity and of Christianity require the preponderance of our language as a common medium of international intercourse and a connecting link between the various members of the civilized world." The language destined to secure this preponderance Dr. Schaff believes to be the English.

Ex-Senator Nathaniel P. Hill, of Colorado, has just published a volume containing some of the speeches which he has delivered in the National Senate and elsewhere. Among the more important questions now agitating the public mind, and receiving the consideration of Congress, are those relating to the postal telegraph and the silver coinage. During Mr. Hill's service in the Senate he was regarded as an authority on both these subjects. His speech on the postal telegraph was the first comprehensive presentation of this subject in the Senate, and since then it has been a national question. But his advocacy of the silver question was generally been considered his most important work in the Senate. While his first speech was delivered a little more than four years after the passage of the act of 1878 remonetizing silver and when barely one hundred millions of dollars had been coined, yet his arguments are as pertinent and strong today, when our coinage is approaching four hundred millions, as they were then. The discussion of these subjects during the last few months has caused great inquiry for these speeches among those who wish to study these subjects carefully. This volume includes all of his speeches delivered in the Senate, together with some contributions to reviews, and also his addresses delivered since he left the Senate which bear on similar questions. The book is neatly printed and bound, and is for sale at Brentano's, Morrison's, and Lowdermilk's.

The fifth volume of John Gorham Palfrey's "History of New England" is issued by Little, Brown & Co., Boston. The author died in 1881, leaving his work incomplete. The present volume was prepared for the press by his son, F. W. Palfrey, but almost wholly from manuscripts left by his father. In a preface the son explains that he has chosen to leave the work in a somewhat incomplete condition as to literary polish rather than incur the risk of sacrificing the integrity of the author's original text. The volume contains a copy of a map of the inhabited portions of New England which was published by Jeffreys in London in 1774 and is now in the Boston Public Library. The volume contains Books V and VI, each consisting of thirteen chapters, and dealing with the progress of the Colonies under the first three Georges. The story is brought down to the appointment of Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces.

"Five Hundred Dollars and Other Stories of New England Life," by Herman W. Chaplin, is issued by Little, Brown & Co. in neat paper covers, and may be had at Robert Bell's for half a dollar. There are half a dozen quaint and well-told stories in the volume, which has met with such success that it is now in its second edition.

The Studio has been converted into a weekly publication, and is now the only weekly art journal published in America.

The April number of Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly has as its leading article an illustrated description of "The Senate and Its Leaders," by Frederick S. Daniel. It is rather heavily written.

According to a rumor which has received a good deal of attention, the first volume of Prince Bismarck's unpublished correspondence, extending from 1862 to 1880, is now almost ready for issue, the second volume being expected to appear in autumn next.

The April Belford's has a notable list of contributors, including Julian Hawthorne, who begins a series of articles on "Celebrated Men of the Day," with "Huxley in Private." Clinton Scollard, Ernest De Lancey Pierson, Col. Chaille-Long, and Rev. E. E. Hale.

David Starr Jordan, president of the University of Indiana, will open the April Popular Science Monthly with a vigorous and lively article on "Science in the High School." Its object is to show up the make-believe character of what is offered in many schools to satisfy the modern demand for science-teaching.

The frontispiece of the April Arena is a portrait of Bishop J. L. Spalding, whose article, "God in the Constitution: A Reply to Col. Ingersoll," will attract widespread attention as a statement of the Catholic position. Rev. Minot J. Savage has an article on "Religion, Morals, and the Public Schools." Stephen M. Allen writes of "A Newly Discovered Law in Physics." W. E. Manley contributes an essay on "Eternal Punishment." Mrs. Stanton writes of "Divorce vs. Domestic Warfare," and there is a notable symposium on "White Child Slavery."

Notable among the articles in the February Forum are "The Degradation of Our Politics," by F. A. P. Barnard, late President of Columbia College; "Education in Boyhood," by President Dwight, of Yale; "Woman's Political Status," by Francis Minor; "Hypnotism and Crime," by Dr. J. M. Charcot, the famous French savant; "No Theology and New Theology," by Rev. Dr. Lyman Abbott, and "Newspapers and the Public," by Charles Dudley Warner. Dr. Barnard's striking article is a historical review of the decay of public duty and of the substitution for it of personal reward as the prime motive in political activity; how this has changed the very conception of political duty in the popular mind, and the very character of our Government. The article concludes with suggestions how to retrace our steps out of this degradation and to make the Government again republican.

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